

The AESC Chats With Chadick Ellig Co-CEOs

1/25/2007

The AESC recently sat down with Susan Chadick and Janice Reals Ellig of the newly-renamed AESC member search firm Chadick Ellig to discuss the new profile of the senior HR executive...

As compared with 10 years ago, how has the role of the senior HR executive changed?

Not that many years ago, HR was a personnel department, charged with employee record-keeping, compliance with laws and legislation, and arranging retirement parties. Today, at "best-in-class" companies, HR has a seat at the table and is a strategic partner looking at the implications of business strategy and the talent gaps that do and will exist. The HR leader must address organizational structure in order to make sure the company has the leadership in place to meet its strategic and growth objectives. Companies today acknowledge that people are their most important intellectual asset. Having the right people, in the right place, at the right time, and compensated correctly has become a core issue for corporations, and the Senior Human Resource Officer must be closely aligned with the CEO in addressing these issues.

What have been the driving factors behind this change?

The talent pool for the best and the brightest is smaller today with the increasing demands on companies to be out in front of their competition which is increasingly global in nature. Companies know that people make the difference--- whether it is developing a new product, technology, alliance, service---it comes down to having the best talent in place. Therefore, CEOs need cutting edge HR Officers to focus on, and guide the senior team, through more highly complex global work environments and all the associated implications in today's high speed world.

How does the role of HR change at a company when the head of HR reports directly to the CEO?

It changes from administrative to strategic, from reactive to proactive, from somebody who executes strategy to somebody who defines strategy. The role of HR is to be both a business partner and an employee champion, and serving as the company's conscience. It is a balancing act but one that the enlightened HR leader knows is a business imperative in retaining talent.

How do you rate the importance of functional versus industry experience in the HR role?

Being a seasoned HR executive is the most critical aspect of functioning in the HR role. Industry experience is helpful, particularly when dealing with union vs. non-union, regulated vs. non-regulated, global vs. domestic population, but we have seen people be quite successful in crossing industries as long as their fundamental expertise, judgment, strategic thinking and understanding of how to get things done in a complex environment are right.

What are the three key traits in a successful HR executive?

Five Core Competencies make for a successful HR Leader: Business acumen, critical listening, discretion, problem-solving, and judgment.

Source: AESC Marketing.